



# City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive  
Bowie, Maryland 20715

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** David J. Deutsch  
City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Draft Federal Capital Improvement Program (FCIP)  
CSX Railroad Realignment NEPA Studies  
(Consent Agenda)

**DATE:** July 29, 2010

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Attached please find a copy of the draft City position letter prepared in response to the Draft FCIP prepared by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). Since 2007, the City has gone on record as opposing the CSX Freight Railroad Realignment proposal from NCPC. The 2007 Freight Railroad Realignment Study identified seven (7) feasible rail corridors in the region for freight trains carrying hazardous and toxic materials, and narrowed those down to three (3) corridors for further evaluation, including two (2) options which would use the existing Pope's Creek Branch Railroad through the Bowie area.

The Draft FCIP continues to show the project as a "Recommended and Strongly Endorsed" project, although there is no specific funding programmed for any aspect of the project. The NCPC commentary on page 150 of the Draft FCIP recognizes the opposition of Bowie and Prince George's County, but suggests that a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental study would be the best means to evaluate alternative alignments. Staff is aware that implementation of CSX's National Gateway project, which would make significant infrastructure improvements to the existing freight railroad corridors running through the District of Columbia, will likely eliminate the Pope's Creek Branch from consideration as a freight railroad route. The attached letter endorses the National Gateway effort and reiterates the City's opposition to funding of NEPA studies or any further examination of the Pope's Creek railroad tracks as a possible solution for the freight rail issue.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approve the attached letter to NCPC indicating the City's opposition to the Freight Railroad Realignment concept.

Attachment

# **DRAFT**

August 3, 2010

Mr. John V. Cogbill, III, Chairman  
National Capital Planning Commission  
401 9<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
North Lobby  
Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20004

**Re:** Freight Railroad Realignment NEPA Studies  
Draft Proposed Federal Capital Improvement Program for the  
National Capital Region, Fiscal Years 2011-2016

Dear Chairman Cogbill:

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the Draft Proposed Federal Capital Improvement Program (FCIP) for the National Capital Region, Fiscal Years 2011-2016 to the City of Bowie for our review. We have again noticed that the Draft Proposed FCIP continues to include, and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) continues to recommend and strongly endorse, a full National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation for the above-referenced project (Page 150).

As you will likely remember, the City of Bowie previously expressed its strong opposition to any aspect of this project and requested that it be deleted from Proposed Federal Capital Improvement Program for the National Capital Region. Your FY 2011-2016 Draft document offers commentary noting that the proposed NEPA evaluation is only one piece of a multi-stage investigation of an important and complex transportation issue, that the NEPA study would evaluate alternatives for the CSX railroad alignment that currently traverses the Monumental Core of the nation's capital and that NCPC looks forward to working with stakeholders, including the City of Bowie and Prince George's County in the NEPA evaluation, if and when such process is initiated.

We would like to go on record at this point opposing initiation of the NEPA study process, recognizing the potential success of the CSX National Gateway project as the preferred alternative. Implementation of the CSX National Gateway project would avoid creation of a heavily-used freight corridor that would disrupt vehicular traffic and the overall quality of life for residents in eastern Prince George's County, as well as Charles County. The CSX National Gateway proposal will reduce bottlenecks by enabling double stack trains to be used along the alignment running through the District of Columbia and then up either the Camden Line or Brunswick Line, thereby eliminating the need for using the Pope's Creek Branch. We therefore find the recommended NEPA evaluation for the Freight Railroad Realignment to be unnecessary.

Should any further consideration of the Pope's Creek corridor be entertained, for the above reasons, the Bowie City Council will continue to oppose and strongly object to any specific funding or examination of a freight railroad realignment that will result in freight trains carrying hazardous and/or toxic materials through the City of Bowie.

Thank you for your consideration of these updated comments and for the opportunity to make recommendations on the Draft FY 2011-2016 Federal CIP.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council  
G. Frederick Robinson  
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin, United States Senate  
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski, United States Senate  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Donna Edwards, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Martin J. O'Malley, Governor, State of Maryland  
The Honorable Anthony G. Brown, Lieutenant Governor, State of Maryland  
The Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters, Maryland State Senate  
The Honorable Marvin Holmes, Maryland House of Delegates  
The Honorable James Hubbard, Maryland House of Delegates  
The Honorable Gerron Levi, Maryland House of Delegates  
Mr. Marcel C. Acosta, Executive Director, NCPC  
Mr. Stacy Wood, Community Planner, NCPC